

FINAL BILL REPORT

EHB 1413

C 328 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Changing the definition of floodway in the shoreline management act.

Sponsors: By Representatives Eddy, Simpson and Curtis; by request of Department of Ecology.

House Committee on Local Government

Senate Committee on Water, Energy & Telecommunications

Background:

The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) governs uses of state shorelines. The SMA enunciates state policy to provide for shoreline management by planning for and fostering "all reasonable and appropriate uses." The SMA prioritizes public shoreline access and enjoyment and creates preference criteria listed in prioritized order that must be used by state and local governments in regulating shoreline uses.

The SMA involves a cooperative regulatory approach between local governments and the state. At the local level, the SMA regulations are developed in local shoreline master programs (master programs). All counties and cities with shorelines of the state are required to adopt and enforce master programs that regulate land use activities in shoreline areas of the state. Master programs must be consistent with guidelines adopted by the Department of Ecology (DOE), and the programs, and segments of or amendments to, become effective when approved by the DOE.

The SMA includes numerous definitions and concepts that guide state and local governments in implementing the SMA. As defined in the SMA, "floodway" means those portions of the area of a river valley lying streamward from the outer limits of a watercourse upon which flood waters are carried during periods of flooding that occur with reasonable regularity, although not necessarily annually. Floodways are identified, under normal conditions, by changes in surface soil conditions or changes in types or quality of vegetative ground cover condition. Floodways must not include lands that can reasonably be expected to be protected from flood waters by flood control devices maintained by or under license from the federal government, the state, or political subdivisions of the state.

The SMA does not contain specific requirements that local governments must satisfy for floodways, but floodways are used in determining where the SMA applies. Additionally, administrative rules adopted by the DOE for reducing flood hazards include provisions that apply to uses and activities that may be appropriate or necessary within floodways.

Summary:

The SMA definition of "floodway" is amended to specify that a floodway is the area, as identified in a master program, that either:

- has been established in Federal Emergency Management Agency flood insurance rate maps or floodway maps; or
- consists of those portions of a river valley meeting certain requirements.

The definition also specifies that floodways may be identified, under normal conditions, by changes in surface soil conditions or changes in types or quality of vegetative ground cover condition, topography, or other indicators of past flooding that occurs with reasonable regularity, although not necessarily annually. Regardless of the method used to identify the floodway, floodways must not include lands that can reasonably be expected to be protected from flood waters by flood control devices maintained by or under license from the federal government, the state, or political subdivisions of the state.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0	
Senate	46	0	(Senate amended)
House	98	0	(House concurred)

Effective: July 22, 2007